

TRUMAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Previous Measure: Demonstration of improved critical thinking

Rationale for Change: Currently, our institutional score has no benchmark, making it impossible for Truman to achieve “sustained excellence.” This requires Truman to improve each year against a three-year rolling average. Because improvement in any learning outcome is non-linear, this is statistically impossible. To put us on the same playing field with all other schools, Truman would like to change its institution-specific measure to something that is benchmarked against the performance of its peer group, the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges.

Proposed Measure Summary: Increased performance of seniors on high-impact practices as measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement

Rationale: High-impact practices have a positive association with student learning and retention. The high-impact practices measured by NSSE include the following:

- Participate in a learning community or other formal program where students take two or more courses together;
- Courses that include a community-based project (service learning);
- Work with a faculty member on a research project;
- Internship, field experience, student teaching or clinical placement;
- Study abroad; and
- Culminating senior experience (capstone course; senior project, portfolio, etc.).

Truman’s goal is to increase the number of students who report that they plan to, or have participated in, high impact practices. The number of students currently reporting these experiences is not at a level that Truman desires given the significant educational impact of the experiences. These practices are consistent with Truman’s public liberal arts mission, highly selective admission criteria and residential experience.

NSSE is a national survey with 716 institutions and 485,000 students participating in 2014. Data is available for COPLAC, our peer institution group. NSSE is administered by the Center for Post-Secondary Research at Indiana University.

Methodology: Currently the NSSE is administered at Truman every two years. If implemented as a performance indicator, it would be utilized on an annual basis. All seniors would be asked to complete the survey in January. The initial three-year rolling average benchmark would utilize 2010-2012-2014 data (2014 data is not available until September 2014). As future senior classes take the survey, the rolling average would be 2012-2014-2015, then 2014-2015-2016.

Successful Performance: A composite index will be utilized which combines the six indicators for high-impact practices. Success would be based on increasing the index over the three-year Truman average by showing improvement or by exceeding the external benchmark. The external benchmark for sustained excellence would be based on the high impact performance results of COPLAC institutions. NSSE will not provide a “top third” indicator for COPLAC institutions due to staffing limitation. However, Truman proposes that an equivalent approach would be exceeding the COPLAC averages on two-thirds (4 of 6) of the high impact measures.